



Testimony to the
Senate Committee on Judiciary in Support of SB 1575

February 8, 2024

Good afternoon Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary. For the record, my name is Mary Larkin, representing Northwest Watersheds LLC, a COBID-certified woman-owned business with 10 employees that has been active for four years. We have been in business in Oregon since 2019 and employ 10 staff, including six engineers and four paid hourly interns. I am writing today to strongly support Senate Bill 1575.

We are pleased to contribute to Oregon's economy by creating jobs, and to provide value to our communities by providing design and planning services for important infrastructure projects. Right now, we are being forced into unfair contracting practices called "duty to defend" clauses, which require us to pay the legal expenses for those involved in construction projects even before fault is determined. This is detrimental to all design firms but especially small businesses like mine. Because engineers, architects and land surveyors are being forced to shoulder all the legal liability and legal expense far beyond what they're able to get insured for, fewer projects are being designed and built in our communities. I am concerned that this could adversely affect efforts to design and construct low-income public housing to help address Oregon's homelessness crisis and its associated infrastructure.

We respectfully ask this committee to support SB 1575.

Thank you for your service and we are happy to be a resource if you have additional questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Larkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Mary Larkin, Principal Engineer/Owner

Northwest Watersheds LLC